



Senators Feinstein and Smith Question Discrimination Policy Shift

-- Senators Send Letter to Office of Special Counsel --
February 26, 2004

Washington, DC – Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) has joined with Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) to question Scott Bloch, Special Counsel of the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) on why the agency’s official website no longer affirms its protection of federal employees from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

All references to sexual orientation discrimination have been removed from OSC’s official website as well as its general brochure on discrimination, its complaint form (OSC-11), a set of training slides for Section 2303(c) programs as well as a section of its website entitled “prohibited personnel practices.”

In a letter sent to Bloch, Feinstein and Smith stated their concern that **“these combined actions may reflect a shift in OSC’s commitment to investigating and prosecuting allegations of sexual orientation discrimination against federal workers.”**

The letter was sent to OSC in response to its apparent cancellation of publicity for its longstanding policy of investigating complaints involving discrimination against federal workers, as well as applicants for federal jobs, based on sexual orientation. In the past, OSC has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to enforcing these anti-discrimination laws.

The Senators also expressed their desire for OSC to **“continue in its past commitment to ensuring that no federal employee is denied employment or improperly terminated on the basis of sexual orientation which does not affect job performance.”**

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